

REMARKS

In the recent Office Action, Claims 1, 5, 6 and 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kondo. Claims 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Harrison. Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harrison.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the personal interview held August 8, 2005. The present response summarizes the substance of the interview and agreement reached. At the interview, proposed amendments to the claims were presented for the Examiner's consideration. Arguments were advanced that the claims of the proposed amendment were not taught nor suggested by the prior art of record. The Examiner indicated the proposed claims 1, 5, 6 and 12-16 continued to be anticipated to by the reference to Kondo. The Examiner further agreed that proposed Claim 8, if written in independent form and made to include all of the limitations of parent Claim 7, with additional language directed to the coating/impregnated cover, appears to define over the prior art of record.

By the present amendment Applicant has amended proposed Claim 7 to include the allowable subject matter of Claim 8, and further to include language directed to the coating/impregnated cover, as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 9 has been amended to depend from Claim 7. Independent Claim 7 and depending Claims 9 and 11 remain in the application, with Claims 1-6, 8, 10 and 12-16 having been canceled.

Applicant will advance arguments hereinbelow to illustrate the manner in which the presently claimed invention is patentably distinguishable from the cited and applied prior art. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

The patent to Harrison (U.S. 5,248,187) discloses a seat belt extension apparatus comprising a flat, elongate, flexible strap 11 having a female latch assembly 14 immovably affixed to one end, and a male, apertured latch plate 15 immovably affixed to the other end of the flexible strap 11. The seat belt extender further includes a removable protector 21 having a semi-rigid support plate 16, with spaced parallel slots 17, a foam pad 18 encasing the support plate 16, and a flexible covering layer 19 covering the foam pad 18. The extension apparatus may further include various elements such as coin receiving housings 22, and an apparatus (Fig. 6) to effect audible signals to prevent an individual from dozing while driving. Harrison does not show, at least, a seat belt extender which includes a strap of limited flexibility with a non-removable, generally stiff, semi-rigid cover that coats or impregnates the strap, wherein the seat belt extender will stand upright when attached to a conventional seat belt anchor component until a lateral force is applied to the seat belt extender.

Since each and every limitation of Applicant's amended Claim 7 is not shown, either explicitly or inherently in Harrison, the Examiner's rejection of Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Harrison is improper, and should be withdrawn. Nor, does Harrison provide a suggestion or incentive to modify the seat belt extender disclosed therein to include a strap of limited flexibility with a non-removable, generally stiff, semi-rigid cover

Application No.: 10/624,501
Art Unit: 3636

Attorney Docket No.: 23052.00
Confirmation No.: 7836

that coats or impregnates the strap, wherein the seat belt extender will stand upright when attached to a conventional seat belt anchor component until a lateral force is applied thereto.

The other prior art references cited in the present application, but not used by the Examiner in his rejections of Claims 7-9 and 11, have also been carefully reviewed, however, Applicant finds nothing therein which would overcome or supply that which is lacking in the applied prior art patent to Harrison noted above.

The claims in this application have been revised to more particularly define Applicant's unique construction in view of the prior art of record. Reconsideration of the claims in light of the amendments and for the following reasons is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If such is not the case, the Examiner is requested to kindly contact the undersigned in an effort to satisfactorily conclude the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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